DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 439 268 CE 079 904

AUTHOR Hoyt, Kenneth B.
TITLE CHS Follow-Up Data. For Persons Entering the Institution, Spring 1994-Fall 1995, N=9518. First Preliminary Findings.
PUB DATE 1998-00-00
NOTE 6p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Career Education; Demonstration Programs; Education Work Relationship; Educational Research; *Employment Patterns; *Job Satisfaction; *Participant Satisfaction; *Postsecondary Education; *Student Attitudes; Vocational Education; Vocational Followup
IDENTIFIERS Educational Marketing

ABSTRACT

Data were obtained for 9,518 former students from 370 postsecondary institutions in 14 states to provide a general answer to the question, "What kinds of occupational experiences are persons enrolled in postsecondary career-oriented programs likely to have after they leave the educational institutions?" This follow-up survey was undertaken by the Counseling for High Skills project at Kansas State University, a demonstration project aimed at using "customer satisfaction" data to encourage more persons to consider enrolling in a postsecondary career-oriented institution. Findings indicated more than 7 in 10 respondents would take the same program and attend the same institution, but 1 in 4 former students would not; more than 50 percent rated "quality of program content" and "instructors" as "high"; and the lowest ratings were found in "job placement assistance." More than half of all former students indicated they were "better off" with new jobs; 11 percent reported themselves to be "worse off." Almost 3 in 4 said they were "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" with their first job after leaving the educational program; only 1 in 5 judged themselves to be "slightly or very satisfied." Slightly over 50 percent of former students reported their first job was exactly the kind of work for which they had prepared; another 27 percent said it was "somewhat related." (YLB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 439 268

CHS Follow-Up Data.

For Persons Entering the Institution Spring 1994 - Fall 1995, N=9518.

First Preliminary Findings.

Kenneth B. Hoyt
Kansas State University

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K. Hoyt

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CE 079 904

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE

First Preliminary Findings - CHS Follow-Up Data
For Persons Entering The Institution Spring, 1994 - Fall, 1995 N = 9518

Kenneth B. Hoyt
Kansas State University

Introduction

The Counseling for High Skills (CHS) project was initiated at Kansas State University in 1992 under a grant from the DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund. CHS is a demonstration project aimed at using "customer satisfaction" data to encourage more persons to consider enrolling in some kind of postsecondary career-oriented educational institution. By doing so, they will, hopefully, acquire specific occupational skills that will enable them to find and hold jobs in the primary labor market.

In order to create the "customer satisfaction" materials called for in CHS, data collection instruments were constructed based on the most common questions prospective students ask when considering enrolling in some knd of postsecondary career-oriented institution. One instrument is administered to currently enrolled students in these institutions. The other is a follow-up survey instrument mailed to these students six months after they have left the institution.

During the 1994 - 1996 period, initial data were gathered from 38,225 currently enrolled students in 2,034 programs in 370 postsecondary institutions in 14 states (Hoyt, K. and Hughey, K. 1997). A large majority of these institutions are community colleges. Most of the remaining are proprietary career institutions. During the 1995 - 1996 period, follow-up data were collected from 10,000+ of these former students. A total of 9,518 of the follow-up instruments were returned in usable form. This represents a return rate of 24.9%.

The primary purpose of this document is to share some initial findings obtained from the total sample of 9,518 former students from these 370 postsecondary institutions. These findings are aimed at providing a general answer to the question "What kinds of occupational experiences are persons enrolled in postsecondary sub-baccalaureate career-oriented programs likely to have after they leave the educational institution?" Hopefully, the general answers supplied here will encourage many studies of specific students in specific programs in specific institutions.

Former Students' Evaluation of the Educational Institution They Attended

Item 4 asked "*If you had the opportunity to start again, would you go to the same postsecondary institution and take the same program?*" Of 9,278 persons responding, 6,677 (70.2%) said "Yes" while 2,601 (27.3%) said "No". With more than 7 in 10 respondents feeling they would both (a) take the same program and (b) attend the same institution, this response is obviously very favorable. Still, with slightly more than 1 in 4 former students answering "No" to this question, it is clear sizable numbers of former students do not feel their needs were met at the institution they attended. This appears to be a "good news-bad news" situation.

Item 3 asked respondents to rate the strengths of the postsecondary institution they attended using ratings of "high", "middle", and "low". Percentage results can be summarized as follows:

Topic	High	Middle	Low
Quality of program content	59.0%	37.0%	3.9%
Instructors	59.2%	35.4%	5.3%
\Use of technology	42.9%	46.6%	10.4%
Job Placement assistance	28.1%	35.1%	36.8%
Equipment	33.7%	52.8%	15.1%

More than 50% of respondents rated both the "quality of program content" and "instructors" as "high" and fewer than 10% rated these qualities as "low". The lowest ratings were found in "job placement assistance" with only slightly more than 1 in 4 former students rating this as " high" and

CE 079904

more than 1 in 3 rating it "low". It appears the area of "job placement assistance" is one former students feel is most in need of improvement. This is tempered somewhat by noting more than 6 in 10 former students rated this area as either "high" or "middle". It seems clear most students are receiving some kinds of job placement assistance. It is equally clear they would like to have more.

Responses to Item 1 indicate 86.8% of respondents reported they completed the entire educational program in which they enrolled. It seems reasonable to suspect a considerably lower percentage figure would exist had responses from all former students been made available. Still, this is an impressive statistic that should be useful to those favoring some form of postsecondary sub-baccalaureate level career-oriented education. A dropout rate of only 14% is less than that usually found for either high school or four-year college students.

Former Student Evaluation of First Jobs Found After Leaving The Educational Institution

If persons undertake and complete some form of postsecondary career-oriented education, do they then find themselves better off in the occupational society than they were before they enrolled in this kind of educational program? Item 20 asked each former student to make judgments comparing the last job they held prior to enrolling in their postsecondary program to their current job now they have left the education program. Each student was asked to make this comparison using "better", "about the same", or "worse" ratings. The results were:

Basis For Comparison	Better	About the Same	Worse
Overall job satisfaction	67%	27%	6%
Enjoyment derived from doing work tasks	64%	31%	5%
Degree to which he/she is well suited to the job	60%	36%	3%
Weekly pay	71%	18%	11%
Chances for advancement	60%	29%	10%
Chances for keeping the job	58%	38%	4%

With each of these six criteria used in comparing current jobs with the last jobs held prior to enrolling in the educational program, more than half of all former students indicated they are "better off" with their new jobs and fewer than 12% reported themselves to be "worse" off. The fact that 11% reported themselves to be "worse off" in terms of weekly pay may possibly be a result of a number of displaced adult workers who have now been forced to equip themselves with new job skills and seek jobs calling for those skills. If the "about the same" and "worse" replies are grouped, they account for about 1 in 3 former students for each of these six categories. Thus, if the general question "Does it pay in terms of these six conditions to enroll in a postsecondary career-oriented institution?" is asked, the general answer appears to be "Yes" about two times out of three and "No" one time out of three.

The CHS Employment Survey was constructed under an assumption that all respondents would have obtained some kind of job after leaving the educational institution. However, a "does not apply" response was included on several items just in case the respondent had never held any job since leaving the institution. Hints with respect to the percent of respondents who had never held any job since leaving the educational institution can be found by noting the percent of respondents marking the "does not apply" response to each of the following items:

Item	% marking the "does not apply" response
8	3.6%
9	7.6%
11	5.9%
12.	4.8%
13	9.4%

Based on these figures, it appears that somewhere between 4% and 9% of former students appear to have held no jobs since leaving the institution. This statistic should be corrected by insertion of a specific item in the next version of the CHS Employment Survey

Item 8 asked former students about their weekly wages on the first job they found after leaving the institution. The percentage of students giving each of the possible responses is:

a. $200 or less per week - - - - - - - -18.7%
b. $201 - $300 per week - - - - - - - -31.2%
c. $301 - $400 per week - - - - - - - 22.8%
d. $401 or more per week - - - - - - 23.7%
e. Does not apply - - - - - - - - - - - - 4.6%

While the modal response was "$204 - $300 per week", it should be noted that 46% of former students reported their weekly wages on the first job they found after leaving the institution to be somewhere between $301 and $400+. As reported earlier for Item 20, a large majority of former students report their weekly wages after leaving the program are greater than they were before enrollment in this program. This is another indicator of the "education pays" situation.

Item 12 asked former students to judge how satisfied they are (or were) with their first job after leaving the educational program. Here, almost 3 in 4 said they are "very satisfied" or "satisfied". Only about 1 in 5 judged themselves to be "slightly dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with that job. In Item 13 former students were asked how their first job after leaving the educational program compared with the kind of job they thought they might be able to get. Here, about 1 in 6 said it was "better", another 1 in 6 said it was "worse", while 3 in 5 said "it is about like I thought it would be". In responding to Item 15, more than 8 in 10 former students reported themselves as now working 31 or more hours per week. Fewer than 5% reported themselves working less than 10 hours per week.

Item 16 asked former students to report the kinds of employer benefits they are receiving on their current job. While almost 2 in 3 reported employers provide "health insurance" benefits, slightly fewer than half reported "disability insurance", "retirement benefits", "life insurance","dental insurance", or "day care facilities" being provided by their employer. It seems clear many former students have not yet found good jobs in the primary labor market.

Former Student Judgments of Relationships Between Career Skills They Acquired and First Jobs Found Following Training

Item 5 asked respondents who helped them learn about the first jobs they obtained after leaving the institution. The most popular responses to this question were:

a. Institutional personnel - - - - - - - - 22.9%
b. Friends or relatives - - - - - - - - - - 22.1%
c. Nobody - I found it myself - - - - - 23.7%
d. All others - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 32.3%

With only about 1 in 5 former students reporting they learned about their first jobs after leaving the institution from institutional personnel, the figures reported earlier showing only about 1 in 4 students rating the institution as "high" for "job placement assistance" are not surprising. These data also indicate that, perhaps, many students have no need for institutional assistance in locating their first jobs after leaving the institution. In any event, the need for postsecondary career-oriented educational institutions to be actively involved in helping former students find jobs seems clear. This need can be seen by observing that when (Item 6) former students were asked if personnel from the institution had made arrangements for them to visit with possible employers, 3 in 4 former students indicated no such arrangements had been made. This seems to be an easily correctable situation.

Item 7 asked "*Was your first job obtained after leaving the postsecondary institution related to your educational program?* " Here, slightly over 50% of former students reported it was exactly the kind of work for which they had prepared and another 27% reported it was "somewhat related". About 1 in 6 former students reported their first jobs unrelated to their educational program. Many educational institutions will find this unacceptable. Certainly, it should not be considered unreasonable for former students to expect they will be able to find a job related to the educational program they have completed!

Item 10 results produced further encouraging news. Here, former students were asked whether or not the skills they learned in the educational program they pursued helped them do better work on the first job they found after leaving the institution. In response to this question, 58% reported "Yes, they help a lot" and another 31% reported "Yes, they are of some help". Only 7% reported "No, they don't help much". It seems clear a large majority of former students felt they had acquired some useful career skills in the educational programs they pursued.

Item 11 asked former students to judge whether or not they believe they could have found their first job after training even if they had not obtained that training. Slightly more than 1 in 3 former students judged they probably could have obtained that job even had they not had the training. On the other hand, almost 2 in 3 former students judged they probably would not have obtained this job had they not had the training.

Concluding Remarks

The findings reported here are based on data obtained from a total sample of 9,518 former students in a non-random sample of 370 postsecondary educational institutions - both public and private - located in 14 states. They clearly do not represent a truly random sample of all persons enrolled in career-oriented programs in postsecondary sub-baccalaureate institutions. In spite of this, it is significant to note results are positive in nature on every item in terms of former student reports concerning the benefits of their education. This is very encouraging! If and when more adequate truly national samples can be generated and used, it seems reasonable to predict the generally positive results seen in these data are likely to continue.

It is almost certain that pronounced differences would be found were these data analyzed item by item for each of the 370 institutions involved here. It seems likely that pronounced differences would also be found between former students from publicly supported institutions and former students from proprietary career colleges offering programs one to two years in length. With the variability resulting from lumping data from a wide variety of students in a wide variety of postsecondary institutions, it is doubtful if the data reported here would correspond very closely with these same data collected from former students of any single educational institution.

In spite of this, the kinds of initial presentation of specific findings presented here will hopefully help those wishing to explore the topic of postsecondary sub-baccalaureate career-oriented institutions. CHS plans to continue collecting these kinds of data. Those interested in working with CHS on this can obtain copies of the CHS data collection instruments from ACT, Inc., P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, IA 52243.

References

Hoyt, K., Hughey, J. & Hughey, K. (1995) An introduction to the "Counseling for High Skills: Vo-Tech Career Options" project. The School Counselor, 43, 10 - 18.

Hoyt, K. and Hughey, K. (1997) Career counseling in the knowledge age: Implications for change in school counselor education programs. Journal of Career Development, 24, 95 - 102.